

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, we are hearing an awful lot of griping from the defenders of big government these days. With the balanced budget amendment on the verge of passage in the House, there are Democrats who still oppose this important government reform. They are attempting to derail the amendment by disingenuously demanding to know how we plan on spending each and every penny in the year 2002.

Well, it is amazing they can look across a kitchen table at ordinary Americans without turning red from embarrassment. Their argument against a balanced budget amendment is essentially: "We don't want to cut government spending. Period."

As American businesses continue to tighten their belts, as a American families watch their paychecks shrink and their children's future become ever darker under the long shadow of government's growing debt, the defenders of big government are digging in. They talk a lot about working families but they refuse to life a finger to save America's middle class from government's out-of-control spending.

The Republican contract with America is our commitment to cut the size score, and cost of government. The balanced budget amendment will forever guarantee that Congress of the future will never again be allowed to spend our children into the near bottomless pit of debt we are in today.

THE HOUSE HISTORIAN'S OFFICE

(Mr. WYNN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to comment on the sad situation affecting the House Historian's Office. In December, around Christmas-time, I read with dismay that the House Historian would be disbanded as another so-called cost-saving measure. But lo and behold, on December 30, it was stated by the Speaker that the office would, in fact, remain. Unfortunately he neglected to disclose that he had already selected the person, a highly partisan supporter of his, who had actually already moved into a suburban Washington townhouse.

Not only do we have a highly partisan Historian, we are also going to have her husband as a paid chronicler. Perhaps there is another book deal in the works, but the most outrageous aspect of this whole situation is the fact that this Historian opposes a disclosure.

Most historians want more information to broaden history. This Historian says she favors secret side contributions and opposes our current Federal election disclosure laws in order to protect GOPC, to protect large contributors who want to contribute behind closed doors.

The Republicans have gone out of their way to say, we are not going to have business as usual. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it appears, based on the evidence of the Historian's Office, that we are not going to have business as usual. We are going to have business that is worse.

HONORING COMMITMENTS

(Mr. CHAMBLISS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the House for the first time as a Member of the House of Representatives.

I am very encouraged by what has taken place in this body in its first days, and if it is any indication of what is to come for the next 2 years, we will be well on our way toward achieving what the American people sent us here to accomplish.

I am particularly encouraged by the aggressive agenda pursued thus far. The majority party made a contract with the people of this country, and as its first acts, we accomplished a very significant portion of that contract.

For my part, I also made commitments, commitments to the people of Georgia's Eighth District. As my first official act, I signed on as original co-sponsor of Mr. BARTON's balanced budget legislation. I also signed a pledge to the people of the Eighth District to refuse any future automatic congressional pay raises with instructions to apply the funds to the reduction of this Nation's debt.

Mr. Speaker, on November 8, the people of this country spoke. We should all be encouraged that this body has received the message.

THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

(Mr. FARR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I support a balanced budget.

I support deficit reduction. I support bringing entitlements under control and eliminating every bit of fat there is in the budget. What I do not support is gimmickry to do it, stealth budgets to get there, or slash and burn tactics to achieve it.

The balanced budget amendment to the Constitution has been sold as the panacea to all our fiscal woes.

Most of us know that it doesn't work that way. There is no balance in a balanced budget amendment.

An amendment doesn't automatically balance the budget. Spending cuts and tax revenues do. Congress has been working to balance the budget for the past 2 years without an amendment.

The new dialog supporting a balanced budget amendment is a way for legislators to avoid the responsibility of making the tough decisions. I don't believe in trying to escape my duties through a legislative "escape clause" and urge my colleagues to reject the balanced budget amendment until it can be shown how to get there.

MORE ON THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

(Mr. SCARBOROUGH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, for 40 years, the Democrats have had control of this Nation's checkbook. For 40 years, they have failed miserably to do what middle class Americans have had to do and have failed miserably to do what State legislatures across this country have had to do, and that is to balance their checkbook.

Now with a fantastic opportunity to do that in the next few months by passing the balanced budget amendment, all they give us is smoke and mirrors and bring up GOPAC or ask us to name every penny that we are going to spend over the next 40 years to balance the budget. It is nothing but smoke and mirrors.

I am honored and proud to be part of a movement that is finally going to bring fiscal responsibility to this House after 40 miserable years of failure.

BALANCING THE BUDGET

(Mrs. SEASTRAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been arguing that we must specifically outline how we are going to balance the budget before we pass a constitutional amendment mandating one. They claim to be supporters of the idea of a balanced budget but because in the past they have been unwilling to make the tough decisions necessary to balance the budget they assume that we are unwilling to as well.

Unfortunately for them, this House has a new keeper and new priorities. Among these new priorities is a balanced budget.

The simple fact is this: Recent polls indicate that more than 75 percent of American people support the balanced budget amendment. It is the will of the people and Mr. Speaker, this is the people's House. And for most of the last 40 years this House has failed them. The balanced budget amendment creates a mechanism to accomplish this necessary goal. The debate must and will begin after our new priorities have been set.